

II. REMARKS

Formal Matters

Claims 23-27, 33, and 35 are pending after entry of the amendments set forth herein.

Claims 23-35 were examined. Claims 28-32 and 34 were rejected. Claims 23-27 were allowed. Claims 33 and 35 were objected to.

Claims 33 and 35 are amended. The amendments to the claims were made solely in the interest of expediting prosecution, and are not to be construed as an acquiescence to any objection or rejection of any claim. Support for the amendments to claims 33 and 35 is found in the claims as originally filed, and throughout the specification, in particular at the following locations: claims 33 and 35: Example 4. Accordingly, no new matter is added by these amendments.

Claims 28-32 and 34 are canceled without prejudice to renewal, without intent to acquiesce to any rejection, and without intent to surrender any subject matter encompassed by the canceled claims. Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue any canceled subject matter in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the remarks made herein.

Previous rejections withdrawn

Applicants note with gratitude that the following rejections, raised in the Office Action dated June 28, 2002, have been withdrawn: (1) the rejection of claims 23, 24, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b); and (2) the rejection of claims 23-27 and 28-35 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Applicants note that the rejection, in the June 28, 2002 Office Action, of claims 23 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, was not reiterated in the final Office Action. Applicants presume that the rejection of claims 23 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph has been withdrawn.

Allowed subject matter

Applicants note with gratitude that claims 23-27 are allowed.

Claims objected to

The Office Action stated that claims 33 and 35 are objected to as depending from a rejected claim, but would be allowable if re-written to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Without acquiescing as to the rejection of claims 28-32, and solely in the interest of expediting prosecution, claims 33 and 35 are re-written to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 28-32 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Cronin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,166,191).

Claims 28-32 and 34 are canceled without prejudice to renewal, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Applicants submit that the rejection of claims 28-32 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) has been adequately addressed in view of the remarks set forth above. The Examiner is thus respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

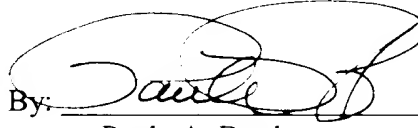
III. CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance, which action is requested. If the Examiner finds that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment of fees associated with this communication, including any necessary fees for extensions of time, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0815, order number CONN003CON.

Respectfully submitted,
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